Wiſdom, Knowledge, and the Fear of God recommended to Rulers & People.

A

SERMON

Preach'd in the Audience of His Honour

SPENCER PHIPS, Eſq;

Lieutenant-Governour and Commander in Chief,

THE HONOURABLE

His *MAJESTY*'s COUNCIL,

AND

Houſe of *REPRESENTATIVES*,

Of the Province of the

MASSACHUSETTS-BAY,

IN

NEW-ENGLAND.

May 30th. 1753.

Being the Day for the *Election* of His *MAJESTY*'s COUNCIL for the PROVINCE.

By *JOHN COTTON*, A. M.

Paſtor of the Church in *Newtown*.

BOSTON: N. E.

Printed by JOHN DRAPER, Printer to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governour and Council. 1753.

In COUNCIL, May 31. 1753.

ORDERED,

THAT *Jacob Wendell* and *Samuel Watts*, Eſqrs. give the Thanks of this Board to the Reverend Mr. *John Cotton*, for his Sermon preached Yeſterday before the GENERAL COURT, being the Anniverſary for the Election of COUNCELLORS, and deſire a Copy thereof for the Preſs.

S. PHIPS.

Copy examin'd, per

THO. CLARKE, Dep. Secr.

BRITISH MUSEUM

AN

ELECTION SERMON.

ISAIAH XXXIII. 6.

AND Wiſdom and Knowledge ſhall be the Stability of thy Times, and Strength of Salvation: The Fear of the Lord is his Treaſure.

IN our Context we have an Account of the great Diſtreſs and Danger *Judah* and *Jeruſalem* ſhould be brought into for their Impiety and Injuſtice, *Behold their valiant Ones ſhall cry without*; thro' Grief and Fear becauſe of their invading Enemies;— and *the Embaſſadors of Peace ſhall weep bitterly*; probably, becauſe of their great Degeneracy and Backſlidings from the holy Truths and Ways of God.

The

The holy Prophet alſo ſpeaks of the great Conſternation the Sinners of *Zion* ſhould be bro't into, and how the Saints and Servants of the Lord ſhould pray to God for them, in ſuch a Day of Diſtreſs, in that Language, v. 2. *O Lord be gracious to us, we have waited for thee, be thou their Arm every Morning, our Salvation alſo in the Time of Trouble.*

And then we have an Account of the holy Security, they ſhould enjoy in the midſt of this Trouble, v. 15th and 16th. *He that walketh righteouſly, and ſpeaketh uprightly, he that deſpiſeth the Gain of Oppreſſions, that ſhaketh his Hand from holding of Bribes, that ſtoppeth his Ears from hearing of Blood, and ſhutteth his Eyes from ſeeing Evil, he ſhall dwell on high, his Place of Defence ſhall be the Munition of Rocks.*

The Prophet further ſpeaks of the Deſtruction of their Enemies, and God's appearing on the Behalf of his People, in which he would be greatly glorified, v. 5th. *The Lord is exalted, for he dwelleth on high; he hath filled Zion with Judgment and Righteouſneſs*; and v. 10th. *Now will I riſe, ſaith the Lord, now will I be exalted*; and then ſpeaks of the happy Settlement of *Jeruſalem*, and the *Jewiſh* State upon this. Religion ſhould revive, and their civil State flouriſh.

This is evidently intimated in the Words of my Text, together with the following Context.

Their pious King *Hezekiah* and his People were hereby encouraged with an Aſſurance, that the bleſſed God ſhould be their Saviour and Refuge, in every Day of Trouble.

Here's

Here's

1st. A gracious Promiſe of God for them to ſtay themſelves upon; *Wiſdom and Knowledge ſhall be the Stability of thy Times, and Strength of Salvation.*

Here's a deſireable End propos'd, ſays an Expoſitor * on this Place, and that is the *Stability of the Times*; that Things be not diſturb'd and unhing'd at Home; and the *Strength of Salvation*; Deliverance and Succeſs againſt Enemies abroad.

And here's the Way and Means for obtaining this End; *Wiſdom and Knowledge*; not only *Piety*, but *Prudence.*

And this it is which by the Bleſſing of God will be the Stability of our Times, and the Strength of Salvation; that Wiſdom which is firſt pure, then peaceable, and which ſacrificeth private Intereſt to the public Good. Such Prudence as this will eſtabliſh Truth and Peace, and fortify the Bulwarks in Defence of them.

Here's,

2dly. A pious Maxim of State, for the King and his People to govern themſelves by, *The Fear of the Lord is his Treaſure*—God's Treaſure in the World, from which he receives his Tribute, or rather, it is the Prince's Treaſure. A good Prince accounts it ſo, that Wiſdom is better than Gold, and he ſhall find it ſo.

And then obſerves, that true Religion is the beſt Treaſure of any Prince, or People; it denominates them rich.

* Mr. *Henry.*

Be ſure, thoſe Places that have wiſe and good Rulers, able and faithful Miniſters, ſerious and pious People, encreaſing among them, are really rich, and it contributes to that which makes a Nation rich in this World. It is therefore moſt certainly the Intereſt of a People to encourage and ſupport Religion among them, and to take heed of every Thing that threatens to hinder it.

The Words I have read may be look'd upon as a remarkable gracious Prophecy, concerning the Peace and Proſperity of the Church and People of God, not only under the happy Reign and Government of this excellent King, but in future ſucceeding Ages, with reſpect both to their civil and religious Intereſts: And if it might be fulfilled in the Age and Day in which we live, we ſhall certainly ſee better Times than we have done in the Times and Years wherein we have ſeen ſo much Evil, for which *the Embaſſadors of Peace*, and many faithful Servants of the Lord, have had cauſe to *weep bitterly*.

In ſpeaking to theſe Words, I ſhall enquire,

I. What may be more particularly meant by the ſeveral Phraſes, or Expreſſions, in the Text?

And then,

II. Shew of what Advantage it would be to the Church and People of God, to have theſe Words fulfilled in our Times.

And then make ſome *Application* of the Subject.

I am,

I. To ſhew what may be more particularly meant or imply'd in the ſeveral Phraſes orExpreſſions in the Text.

And,

Firſt, What by *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge?*

It may mean *Knowledge* and *Wiſdom* both humane and divine; and that comes from above, from the Father of Lights, the inexhauſtible Fountain of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, *in whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge.* That *Wiſdom that dwells with Prudence*, and that ſhall be profitable to direct in all Matters of Importance, with reſpect to outward and temporal, civil or eccleſiaſtical Affairs, in which the publick Welfare is concern'd; and more eſpecially with reſpect to that Knowledge and Wiſdom that is divine and heavenly, which makes Men of all Orders, and in every Station, *Wiſe* for their ſpiritual and eternal Intereſts; ſo that they know God and *Jeſus Chriſt*, whom to know is Life eternal.

An infinitely wiſe and gracious God is pleas'd to accompany with his Bleſſing the Means of a religious and learned Education, for the qualifying and accompliſhing Men for the Service of God, and their Generation, in various Offices and Stations, in which they may be inſtrumental of promoting the publick Good, in a greater or leſſer *Sphere*, as God in his Providence ſhall call, incline, and diſpoſe them to it.

And all theſe Talents, Advantages and Qualifications ſhall be bro't under a ſolemn Conſecration

to the God of all their Powers, and ſovereign Lord and Ruler of Heaven and Earth, who *giveth Wiſdom to the Wiſe, and Knowledge to them that know Underſtanding.*

I proceed to ſhew in the next Place, What may be meant by *Wiſdom and Knowledge being the Stability of the Times.* And now; This may imply in it, a People's being diſtinguiſhingly favour'd of God, under the Reign of a *King* whoſe Throne ſhall be eſtabliſh'd on the ſure Foundations of Wiſdom and Juſtice; and under the Adminiſtration of wiſe and good Rulers, in ſubordinate Places of Authority, both in Church and State, who ſhall improve their Wiſdom and Knowledge for the Advancement of the Honour and Glory of God, and the beſt Good of their People, that they may ſerve the Lord and their Generation, according to the Will of God in their ſeveral Places and Stations.

More particularly;

That *Magiſtrates* and *Rulers* are Men knowing in the Times; Men of *Political Wiſdom*; Men of Knowledge and Prudence, able to diſcern Time and Judgment; *wiſe Men and Underſtanding, and known among their Tribes,* and Men of extenſive Knowledge, and capable of judging what may be moſt conducive to promote the publick Weal in all Reſpects; are Men of a *Genius* for Government, and able to judge what Laws may be beſt enacted for promoting the civil and religious Intereſts of their People, and for ſuppreſſing all Sin and Wickedneſs, that threatens the Ruin of a People in all their Intereſts; are Men of Wiſdom to ſearch into Matters to be conſidered by them, that they may judge on which

which ſide Truth and Juſtice lies, and have a Diſcretion and Aptneſs to apply the Knowledge they have to the Ends of Government, and to the Nature and Circumſtances of thoſe Things that are brought under their Conſideration.

And are Men of *Courage* and *Reſolution*, not afraid of the Faces of Men; and are juſt and upright, impartially diſtributing Juſtice to others, and have a ſteady conſtant Care and Zeal to promote Juſtice and Righteouſneſs among Men; and are a Terror to evil doers, and a Praiſe to ſuch as do well, and exemplary for every Thing that is virtuous and Praiſe-worthy.

And are indeed truly *pious* and *godly*, which introduceth a divine Bleſſing on other Qualifications, and adds a Luſtre and Beauty to them all; for the *pureſt Politicks* (as an able excellent Ruler and Divine of our own ſays) are but *inſipid Traſh*, unleſs they have this Seaſoning. It is this that influences and actuates the Principles of moral Honeſty and Juſtice. It is this that muſt ſtrengthen the Hearts, and rouſe the Courage of Rulers, againſt the moſt daring Tranſgreſſors. It was therefore excellent Counſel of *Jethro* to *Moſes*, † *Thou ſhalt provide out of all the People able Men, ſuch as fear God, and place ſuch over them to be Rulers.*

Such was this godly King *Hezekiah*, and a ſingular Pattern he was of a tender Concern for Religion, and the Miniſters of it, to the Honour of whoſe Memory it is recorded, that *he ſpake comfortably*

† Exod. 18. 21.

to all the Levites, that taught the good Knowledge of the Lord, ‖ and took effectual Care that the Portion of Maintenance aſſign'd them by the Law of God, ſhould be rendered to them, that they might be encouraged in the Work of the Lord.

And thoſe who follow his Example, will in their Day contribute to the *Stability of the Times.*

Again;

That the *Miniſters* of the everlaſting *Goſpel, are Men of Knowledge and Underſtanding; Paſtors after God's own Heart*; to whom God gives the Tongue of the learned, to know how to ſpeak a Word in Seaſon to them that are weary, are Scribes well inſtructed in the Doctrines and Duties of pure and undefiled Religion, and wiſe to win Souls, are endow'd with proper Gifts and Qualifications for the Diſcharge of the great Truſt repoſed in them, and have brought them under a ſacred Dedication to the Service of their Lord and Maſter, and are willing to ſpend and be ſpent in the Service of Chriſt and precious Souls, eſpecially thoſe committed to their more immediate Inſpection and Charge, tho' the more abundantly they love them, the leſs they ſhould be loved.

They will faithfully declare the whole Counſel of the Lord, whether Men will hear, or whether they will forbear; will cry aloud, and not ſpare, but lift up their Voice like a Trumpet, to ſhew to the People their Tranſgreſſion, and the Houſe of *Jacob* their Sins.

‖ 2 Chr. 30. 22. and Ch. 31. 4.

They

They will plainly ſhew to Men the Way of Salvation preſcribed in the Goſpel, and in Meekneſs inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance, to the acknowledging of the Truth, and that they may recover themſelves out of the Snare of the Devil, who have been taken Captive by him at his Will. They will give no juſt Cauſe of Offence in any Thing that the Miniſtry may not be blamed on their Account. And if they ſhould be reviled, they will revile not again, if they ſhould ſuffer, they will threaten not, but commit themſelves to that God that judgeth righteouſly; and endure all Afflictions and Tryals as good Soldiers of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as knowing that if they are faithful to the Death, they ſhall receive the Crown of Life.

Again;

That the *common People* are well inſtructed, and evidently under the good Impreſſions of a religious Education, and deſirous of living quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty; that they may obey the Laws of God, and the Laws of their Rulers, if not *repugnant* to the Laws of God.

That they are, in a Word, a reformed, righteous and godly People, ſteadfaſtly adhereing to the holy Truths and Ways of God, and are adding to their Faith, Virtue, to Virtue, Knowledge, to Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godlineſs, Brotherly-kindneſs and Charity. And being wiſe and endued with Knowledge, do ſhew out of a good Converſation their Works with Meekneſs of Wiſdom; and do nothing thro' Strife or vain Glory, but every Thing in lowlineſs of Mind, eſteeming others better than them-

themſelves, and will let their Moderation be known to all Men; and all Bitterneſs and Wrath, Anger, Clamour and Evil-ſpeaking ſhall be put far away; and they will put on as becomes the Elect of God, Bowels of Mercies, Kindneſs, humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, Forbearance and Forgiveneſs towards others; if they have a Quarrel againſt any, and follow after the Things that make for Love and Peace, and Things wherewith they may edify, ſtrengthen and comfort one another, that they may live in Love and Peace. And tho' they may have a Diverſity of Opinion and Judgment in Matters not eſſential and fundamental, are notwithſtanding reſolved, by the Help of God, to maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the Bonds of Peace, and to guard againſt all Alienations of Heart one from another, and be ever willing to do all kind and good Offices for one another, as they have Ability and Opportunity for it.

And having thus ſhewn what may be meant by Wiſdom and Knowledge being the Stability of the Times; I paſs to conſider the next Expreſſion, of *Wiſdom and Knowledge being the Strength of Salvation.*

It may imply in it, That this will lay a happy Foundation for obtaining from an infinitely wiſe and gracious God, all that Mercy and Salvation we may ſtand in need of as a *People.*

That the Lord will ride upon the Heavens for our Help, and in his Excellency upon the Skies; That he will ſtir up his Strength and come and ſave us: that he will ſcatter all impending, dark and threatning

threatning Clouds, by the Light of his Countenance; that Salvation ſhall be nigh to us, and Glory yet dwell in the Land.

That he will pour out his Spirit on our Rulers, Miniſters and Churches, and revive his Work in the midſt of the Years, and in Wrath remember Mercy.

That our Times ſhall be Times of a more general, thoro' Repentance, and Reformation of all God-provoking Evils; and God will then ſave us from our Sins, and deſolating Judgments, and yet delight to build and to plant us, and not to pluck us up, and pull us down.

That though he may give us the Bread of Adverſity and the Water of Affliction, our Eyes ſhall yet ſee our Teachers, that they ſhall not be removed into Corners, nor our Candleſticks be removed out of their Places, and we ſhall not be in vain wiſhing for the Days of the Son of Man.

It may imply in it, That the Name of the Lord is our ſtrong Tower, and that we ſhall flee to it and be ſafe; that we may put our Truſt in God, as the Hope of his *Iſrael*, and their Saviour and Strength in every Day of Trouble; and that we ſhall be hid under the Shadow of his Wings until theſe Calamities ſhall be over-paſt, and ſhall finally obtain *Salvation* with eternal Glory in the coming World.

I proceed to conſider briefly, the other and laſt Expreſſion, of *the Fear of the Lord being his Treaſure.*

It

It may, in a Word, mean the Lord's giving to *Kings* and *Rulers* a Heart to *fear* him: And their chief Treaſure and Delight, as an Expoſitor ſays on this Place, is, and ſhall be in promoting the Fear and Worſhip of God, which ſhall be a great Honour and Safe-guard to themſelves and People.

It may mean, That the Lord has wro't in their Hearts, a reverential holy Fear of Him, ſo that they ſet the Lord always before them, and ſtand in awe of him, as the ſupreme, almighty Ruler and Governor among the Nations, and as one continually looking down from Heaven upon them, to ſee how they ſeek and ſerve him, and diſcharge the various Duties incumbent on them, in their ſeveral Places and Stations; and hence are ſollicitous to keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and Men, in all their Adminiſtrations, and to have the Teſtimony of their Conſciences for them, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity they have their Converſation in the World.

And this is an inexpreſſible Support and Conſolation to them, in their various Offices and Stations.

No worldly Treaſure is ſo near and dear as this; they prefer their Intereſt in the Approbation and Favor of God, to all the Honors, Riches and Pleaſures of this World.

They eſteem it much better to get Wiſdom than Gold, and to get Underſtanding, rather to be choſen than Silver. They love the Commandments of God above Gold; and make the Word of God the Man of their Counſel, a Light to their Feet, and

and a Lamp to their Paths. And all their Tempers and Behaviors in every Station and Condition of Life, are under the Government of this holy Principle, ruling in their Hearts.

And now I proceed to the *ſecond* general Head of my Diſcourſe.

II. To ſhew of what Advantage it would be to the Church and People of God, to ſee the Accompliſhment of this Prophecy in our Times?

It's certain nothing could conduce more to keep off waſting Judgments, and to promote the public Weal and Tranquility of a People, both in their civil and religious Intereſts, than to be endow'd with this Wiſdom, Knowledge, and the Fear of God. This would bring on that Stability of the Times, and Strength of Salvation, we ſo much need at this Day.

And here I ſhall only ſay,

1. It would be a happy Means of averting threatned Judgments.

And,

2. Of procuring all needed Mercies and Bleſſings.

1. *It would be a happy Means of averting threatned Judgments.*

It is the want of this Wiſdom, Knowledge, and Fear of the Lord, that provokes a holy and righteous God to ſend down his Judgments on us. So it was with his profeſſing People of old, who

were called on † to hear the Word of the Lord, who had a Controverſy with the Inhabitants of the Land, becauſe there was no Truth, nor Mercy, nor *Knowledge* of God; but Swearing, and Lying, and Stealing, and committing Adultery, and other ſcandalous Iniquities abounding in the midſt of them; and therefore the Prophet ſays, The Land ſhall mourn, and every One that dwelleth therein ſhall languiſh, and Deſtruction be bro't upon them for lack of *Knowledge*. Becauſe they had rejected *Knowledge*, God wou'd alſo reject them. They had forgotten the Law of their God, and he wou'd alſo forget their Children: And becauſe they ſinned againſt him, as they were increaſed, therefore he wou'd change their Glory into Shame; puniſh them for their Ways, and reward them their Doings.

The Prophet *Iſaiah* ſays, concerning this People, * None calleth for Juſtice, nor any pleadeth for Truth, they conceive Miſchief, and bring forth Iniquity, and there is no Judgment in their Goings, they had made them crooked Paths, and by going therein ſhould not know Peace; and therefore Judgment would be far from them, neither ſhould Juſtice overtake them; they waited for Light, but behold Obſcurity, for Brightneſs, but they walked in Darkneſs: Though they looked for Judgment there was none, and for Salvation, but it was far from them.

And what now was the Cauſe of all this?— Their Tranſgreſſions were multiply'd, and their

† Hoſea, Ch 4th. * Chap. 59th.

Iniquities

Iniquities teſtify'd againſt them, in tranſgreſſing and lying againſt the Lord, and departing away from their God, ſpeaking Oppreſſion and Revolt, conceiving and uttering from the Heart, Words of Falſhood; and Judgment was turned away backward, and Juſtice ſtood afar off; Truth was fallen in the Street, and Equity could not enter; and the Lord ſaw it, and it diſpleaſed him that there was no Judgment, and ſo the Wrath of God came down upon them. God has expreſly declar'd in his Word, that if his People will not be reformed, but walk contrary to him, he will walk contrary unto them, and puniſh them yet ſeven Times more for their Sins.

But what Encouragement have we to fear the Lord, and obey his Voice; and that upon our Repentance, and returning to the Lord, he will have Mercy on us, and not bring threatned diſtreſſing Calamities upon us; that we ſhall be deliver'd from Earthquakes and Wars, Famine and Peſtilence, and every other deſolating Judgment, and the Lord would repent him of what further Evil he had thought to do unto us.

Again,

2. *It wou'd be a happy Means of procuring all needed Mercies and Bleſſings.*

God has in his Word abundantly encourag'd the Beſtowment of ſuch Bleſſings, if we become a righteous and godly People.

We might then hope for God's gracious Preſence with his People; that his Eye would be on them for good continually; that he would appoint

Salvation for Walls and Bulwarks, as he did about *Zion*; and command Deliverance and Salvation for them in Times of Fear and Danger, and blaſt the Attempts of their invading Enemies, by marvellous Interpoſitions of Providence, as in Times paſt.

And when their Ways pleaſe the Lord, will cauſe their Enemies to be at Peace with them, and their Peace ſhould be as a River, and their Righteouſneſs, as the Waves of the Sea.

And the *Throne* ſhall be eſtabliſhed by Righteouſneſs, and that Righteouſneſs abound, that ſhall exalt his People; and we ſhall feel the happy Influence of it, in all Orders and Societies of Men.

Our *Civil Rulers* would be then Miniſters of God for Good; Fearers of God, Men of Truth, and Haters of Covetouſneſs; zealous in diſcountenancing all Immorality, Sin and Wickedneſs, and promoting Piety and Virtue, Peace and good Order.

We ſhould have our Judges reſtored, as at the firſt, and our Counſellors as at the Beginning. We might then hope for a happy Union in their Counſels, for promoting the publick Tranquility; that Judgment ſhould run down our Streets as Water, and Righteouſneſs as a mighty Stream, have it's free Courſe and due Exerciſe among us; that our Officers ſhould be Peace, and Exactors Righteouſneſs; and the Cry of Unrighteouſneſs, Oppreſſion and Extortion be no longer heard in the Land.

And Things ſhou'd yet go well in the midſt of us.

And

And we ſhould be ſmiled on in our *eccleſiaſtical* and religious as well as civil Affairs; and the Land be always favour'd with a learned, orthodox, pious and faithful Miniſtry; and the Churches of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt have Grace, Mercy and Peace multiply'd to them, and be flouriſhing under the Dews of Heaven; be as well-water'd Gardens and fruitful Fields, which the Lord has bleſſed; and be increaſed with the Increaſes of God; filled with true and genuine Converts, and Converts with Righteouſneſs and Peace and Joy in the HolyGhoſt.

And the *Means of Education* ſhou'd be remarkably ſmiled on; *Schools of Learning* always duly promoted and encouraged, for the Inſtruction and Government of our Children and Youth; and the *College* continued a great and rich Bleſſing to the Land; a Fountain whoſe Streams ſhall rejoice and make glad the City and People of God; and from whence our Churches ſhall be ſupply'd with able and faithful Paſtors, to feed them with Knowledge and Underſtanding, and to break the Bread of Life unto them.

In a Word, If Wiſdom and Knowledge might be the Stability of our Times, and Strength of Salvation, and the Fear of the Lord our Treaſure, we might hope that our Priviledges, religious and civil, ſhould be continued, and tranſmitted as a valuable Inheritance to the lateſt Poſterity.

And God, even our own God, would maintain our Cauſe, as the Matter might require; and raiſe up Friends and Benefactors for us; and diſappoint the Devices and Deſigns of thoſe that wiſh us ill.

And

And we ſhould yet find Favour before the King and his Miniſters, and the *Agency* for us be always under his gracious Conduct and Direction, and the Things which belong to our Peace not be hid from them who are intruſted with our Counſels.

Such Bleſſings both of the Providence and Grace of God, have we Reaſon to hope for, if the *Prophecy* in my Text ſhould be fulfill'd, and we ſhould become a wiſe, righteous and holy People. Such Righteouſneſs wou'd ſoon exalt a People, we are aſſur'd from the Word of God, while Sin will be a Reproach to us, and bring down the Judgments of Heaven on us: So that we may now apprehend ſomething of the Advantage, it would be to the Church and People of God, to ſee the Accompliſhment of this Prophecy, as it would be a happy Means of averting threatned Judgments, and procuring many deſirable needed Favours and Bleſſings from the Father of Mercies, and God of all Wiſdom and Grace.

I now come to the

APPLICATION.

And,

1. We may from what we have heard learn, *the Reaſon why our Times have been, and are ſo melancholy at this Day.*

It is becauſe Wiſdom and Knowledge have not been the Stability of the Times; the Fear of the Lord has not been our Treaſure.

Multitudes

Multitudes have been and are deſtitute of the Wiſdom that is from above, that is firſt Pure, then Peaceable, Gentle and eaſy to be intreated, and that is full of good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocriſy. They may be wiſe in their own Eyes, and prudent in their own Sight, but not truly wiſe according to the Senſe that has been given of the Wiſdom and Knowledge ſpoken of in my Text.

They are poorly qualify'd for the Service of God, and their Generation, according to the Will of God, in every Station and Condition of Life.

How many are wiſe to do Evil, but to do Good have no Knowledge? There's no Fear of God in their Hearts, or before their Eyes; they caſt off Fear, and reſtrain Prayer before the Lord, and will not ſtir up themſelves to take hold of God; are awfully indolent, ſlothful and careleſs about engaging in the Fear and Service of God, and will not hear his Voice by his Word or Judgments.

And while it is thus with the Generality of God's Covenant profeſſing People, we may not look for better Times; but may fear the Infliction of more diſtreſſing Judgments, if we remain an impenitent and incorrigible People, refuſing to be reformed.

I paſs to a *ſecond Uſe.*

2. *Let us be thankful for any Tokens we have of the Lord's gracious Preſence with us.*

Tho'

Tho' it be ſtill in many Reſpects a Day of Trouble and Diſtreſs, a Day of Darkneſs and Gloominess, a Day of Clouds and thick Darkneſs, yet, bleſſed be God, we are not without ſome comfortable Tokens that the Lord is yet among us, and has not utterly forſaken us.

We have our Priviledges, religious and civil, yet continued to us, and have Reaſon for Thankfulneſs to God for the Smiles of his Providence on us, with reſpect to ſuch as are now in Civil Rule over us. In a particular manner for lengthning out the Life of our gracious KING, after ſo many repeated ſorrowful Breaches on his ROYAL FAMILY, and ſo far ſucceeding his Adminiſtrations for lengthening out the Peace and Tranquility of *Europe*.

And that we have yet among *Us* wiſe and good Rulers, ſuch we truſt who fear God, and eſpouſe the Cauſe and Intereſt of his Kingdom and Glory among us; and are, according to their Abilities and Opportunities, daying themſelves out for promoting the publick Weal and Tranquility of this People, in their moſt valuable Intereſts.

We have cauſe of Thankfulneſs alſo, that we are yet favour'd with a learned, uſeful and faithful Miniſtry, who have at Heart the Advancement of the Honour and Glory of God, and the Salvation of precious Souls, committed to their Charge, and not being ignorant of Satan's Devices are carefully guarding againſt them; eſpecially when he is by divine Permiſſion transformed into an Angel of Light, and endeavouring to propagate a Spirit of *Enthuſiaſm*, *Error* and *Deluſion*; are then doing their

their utmoſt to preſerve their *Churches* from *Errors in Judgment*, and *Diſorders in Practice*; and that pure and undefiled Religion may have a glorious Spread thro' the Land, without ſuch corrupt Mixtures.

And we ſhou'd be thankful, that there are yet a happy Number of Churches, walking in the Faith and Order of the Goſpel, and many faithful Saints and Servants of the Lord, whoſe Hearts are eſtabliſh'd with the Grace of God, and not carried about with divers and ſtrange Doctrines, and are walking before God in all his Commandments and Ordinances blameleſs; are meek, humble, ſincere Diſciples and Followers of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, adorning their holy Profeſſion, by a ſober, righteous and godly Life and Converſation; do indeed fear God, and honor the King, and render to *Cæſar* the Things which are *Cæſar's*; and to God, the Things which are God's; are Lovers of Peace and good Order, praying for Kings and all in Authority, and living quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.

Theſe are Inſtances and Tokens of the Grace and Favour of God, which we ſhould be humbly thankful for. And may we have further Cauſe to be ſo; and may God in his infinite Mercy, prevent the riſing Generation from cheriſhing and encouraging an ignorant, unlearned and unqualify'd Miniſtry, however it may be with reſpect to many of the preſent Generation riſen up.

May all uſeful humane Learning be more encourag'd and promoted in the midſt of us; for Religion,

(as an excellent Divine, not long ſince, ſaid, in a Sermon on ſuch an Occaſion as this) will ſoon Decay without Learning, and even die, without a learned and faithful Miniſtry.

But I proceed to the *third and laſt Uſe.*

3. *Let us all be exhorted to do our utmoſt, that Wiſdom and Knowledge may be the Stability of our Times, and Strength of Salvation, and the Fear of the Lord our Treaſure.*

I would now bring this Exhortation to our Civil Rulers; to the Lord's Embaſſadors; and to the People; and ſo conclude.

And in the firſt Place,

1. With all due Deference and Reſpect to your HONOUR, who with the *Honourable Board*, have deſir'd me, (however unworthy) to bring the Meſſages of God to *You*, and the *Aſſembly*, this Day.

SIR,

We rejoice in the over-ruling Providence of God in your preſent Advancement to the chief Seat of Government among us; and we truſt He has done it in Favour to this People; who, I am perſwaded, are near and dear to you, and that you find a ſincere Diſpoſition and Inclination of Heart to promote the moſt valuable Intereſts of this People, which you have now an Opportunity for; and will, we truſt, by the Grace of God helping you, diligently and faithfully improve, to anſwer the great and good Ends of civil Rule and Government.

We

We therefore heartily wiſh and pray, That you may have given, and increaſed to you, the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, the Spirit of Counſel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord; and may have all that Wiſdom and Grace that may be needful to Conduct the publick Affairs in ſuch a manner, as ſhall yield peaceful Reflections to you in the cloſe of your Adminiſtration; when having ruled with God as *Hezekiah* did, you may with him reflect and ſay, *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight* †. And may humbly plead with God, as another pious Ruler did, *Think upon me, my God for good, according to all that I have done for this People.* *

Such a Conſciouſneſs of your Integrity, and generous diffuſive Benevolence, will give you Peace and Comfort alſo, in an advanced Age, — in the Cloſe of your Days, — and even everlaſting Conſolation and Joy, beyond Death and the Grave.

Let me in the next Place Addreſs this Exhortation,

2. To the Honorable his Majeſty's Council, and honorable Houſe of Representatives, now aſſembled in the Houſe of God.

Hear my Words, O ye wiſe Men, and give Ear unto me, ye that have Knowledge. ‖

† 2 Kings 20. 3. * Nehem. 5. 19. ‖ Job 34. 2.

Be now exhorted, my *worthy Brethren*, to do what in you lies, that Wiſdom and Knowledge may be the Stability of the Times, and Strength of Salvation, and the Fear of the Lord our Treaſure.

This has been, I truſt, and will be your Prayer to the God of all Wiſdom, from whom comes down every good and perfect Gift.

You know it was the Prayer of a wiſe and excellent Ruler; *Give me now Wiſdom and Knowledge; that I may go out and come in before this People: And God ſaid unto him, Wiſdom and Knowledge is given unto thee* *. And he prayed again †, *Give thy Servant an Underſtanding Heart, that I may diſcern between good and bad: And the Speech pleaſed the Lord; and God ſaid unto him, becauſe thou haſt aſked this Thing, I have given thee a wiſe and an underſtanding Heart.*

And if you, our *honoured Rulers*, have ſuch an Heart given to you, it will be evident to your own Satisfaction and Comfort, and others alſo, in your wiſe and faithful Improvement of the Priviledge granted you, by the *Royal Charter*, in the *Elections* of this Day.

You will have your Hearts and Pens employ'd in the Choice of thoſe, whom you verily believe will be able and faithful Councellors; Men of Knowledge and Diſcerning, acquainted with the State and Intereſts of their Country, and heartily well-

* 2 Chron. 10. 12. † 1 Kings 3. 9, 10.

affected

affected to it, as well as loyal to their KING. Men of Integrity, of known Virtue and Piety, Courage and Reſolution, and ſteady Friends to our civil and religious Priviledges; and that will conduct in our political Affairs under the Government of a publick Spirit, and a generous diſintereſted View to the publick Good.

If Wiſdom, Knowledge and the Fear of God, are ſo neceſſary to the Stability of the Times, and ſuch Qualifications ſo requiſite in civil Rulers; let the Conſideration of it have a governing Influence on your Hearts, in the publick Tranſactions of this Day, that you may herein approve your ſelves to an omniſcient GOD, who will accurately and critically obſerve from what Principles, and with what Views you ſhall act in this important Affair.

You have been, I truſt, looking out, for the moſt able, wiſe and underſtanding among our Tribes, and thoſe eſpecially who *Fear the Lord*: For it cannot be rationally tho't, (as an able Divine and Ruler once ſaid in a Sermon on the like Occaſion,) that ſuch as have not the Fear of God ruling in their own Hearts, are qualify'd as they ought to be, for the weighty Charge of Government.

It is therefore greatly to be deſir'd and endeavour'd by ſuch as have the Liberty and Favour of chuſing ſuch an Order of Men, that *thoſe who will not have God to rule in their own Hearts, ſhou'd have as little as may be to do, in the ruling of his People.*

You

You have had, *my honour'd Fathers and Brethren*, many ſeaſonable and faithful Counſels given you on ſuch a Day as this, in the Name and Fear of the Lord, by his faithful Servants; and I truſt you have had them ſo impreſs'd on your Minds, as that you will in the Fear of God proceed in the important Affair before you, which ſo nearly concerns the Peace, Proſperity and Happineſs of the People of God among whom you live; and that we ſhall have abundant Cauſe of Rejoicing, in the Proſpect, that Wiſdom and Knowledge ſhall yet be the Stability of our Times, and Strength of Salvation, and the Fear of the Lord our Treaſure, and ſo *the Lord be exalted, and our Zion filled with Righteouſneſs.*

And if you do this Day faithfully diſcharge the Truſt repoſed in you, you will have the inexpreſſible Satisfaction and Comfort of contributing to it.

I ſhall finiſh my Addreſs to our honoured Rulers, with an *Extract* of ſome [ſeaſonable] Paſſages concerning the Qualifications of a good *Senator*, or *Repreſentative* of his Country, deſcribed by an excellent Writer, ſo early as in the Reign of *King* EDWARD *the* VI*th*, in a Diſcourſe on *the Accompliſhed Senator* * ; and well worthy of a great Attention and Regard, on ſuch a Day as this.

The Qualifications are enumerated and deſcribed by him in the following Manner.

* In the 14th Vol. of the Republick of Letters, for *September*, 1734.

" Before

" Before the good Senator can be thoroughly " accompliſhed, he muſt be well acquainted with " the Cuſtoms of his own Country, and the Man- " ners of his Country-men, their Tempers, Diſpo- " ſition and general Behaviour, their Sentiments " and Opinions concerning the preſent Poſture of " Affairs, and all the remarkable Occurrences and " Paſſages of public Life.

" He muſt thoro'ly underſtand the Laws of his " own Country : He muſt be well acquainted with " the true Nature of War and Peace ; what Quar- " rels and Enmities his People are engaged in ; and " what Leagues and Treaties are ſubſiſting between " them and their Neighbours ; what Taxes are al- " ready impoſed on the Subject, or neceſſary to be " demanded ; what the Rights of the People are ; " and what the Proceedings of the Miniſtry ; what " Diſcipline is obſerved ; or in what Manner the " Laws are executed ; what are the Diſpoſitions of " the Populace, and how at preſent they ſtand af- " fected ; what are theirDiſcontents or Differences ; " and how they are to be allay'd and pacify'd ; " what is the preſent State of Morality ; how the " Youth of hisCountry are educated and employ'd ; " what Principles, Cuſtoms and Rules of Confor- " mity are neceſſary to be introduc'd to moralize a " People ; and what is the preſent State of Religi- " on, or the public Worſhip of God.

" Nor muſt he be ignorant of the Genius, Laws, " Manners, Intereſts, Rights and Demands of his " Countries, Allies and Confederates.

" He

" He muſt be no Stranger to the Reaſons and " Ends of Government, nor to the Proceedings of " all the Courts of Judicature, or public Aſſemblies.

" He ſhould know what daily occurs in the Ad- " miniſtration; what are the Characters of thoſe he " is principally concerned with; and what are the " Deſires and Expectations of his Fellow-Subjects.

" Thus ought he to abound with *Wiſdom*, *Know-* " *ledge*, and Experience.

" His Reſolution ſhould be fixed in all Things " to think and act aright.

" He ſhould ſcorn to be implicitly and ſervilely " a Follower of the Opinions or Dictates of others.

" He ſhould never look upon any Thing as juſt " and right, worthy of Praiſe and agreable to his " Character, but what is dictated to him by Wiſ- " dom and Virtue, by ſound Reaſon, and the Laws " of his Country.

" A Senator ſhould alſo know perfectly the Na- " ture, Limitation, and Extent of the Kingly Autho- " rity. Kings were made, not for their own, but " their People's Sake, and ſhould in all their Coun- " ſels and Undertakings prefer the common to any " private or ſeperate Intereſt whatſoever.

" The great Deſign of their Government is, that " the Rights and Liberties of their People might be " preſerved.

" The

"The Senate have an Authority, and Dignity "concurrent with the Regal; and to this Body "they owe proper Deference and Regard, and "ſhould always be in readineſs to protect and de-"fend it.

"The ſupreme Power of Kings was intended "as a Security for the good and virtuous, and "as a Terror to the Wicked. It was lodg'd in "their Hands, as Avengers of the Wrongs and "Injuries of their Subjects, Protectors of their "Liberties, and Judges to decide between the "Good and the Evil.

I will add but one Paragraph more.

"A good and upright Judge is the Life and "Soul of the Law, and the living Oracle of a "Common-Wealth.

"It is the proper Buſineſs of ſuch a One to be "the Miniſter of Juſtice, his firſt and greateſt Ac-"compliſhment to know and diſcern what is true "and right. The Laws of his Country are his "only Guide and Direction, to which he will "ſtrictly conform himſelf in all his Opinions, "Proceedings and Sentences. From theſe he will "never vary in the leaſt Point whatſoever; but "will give Judgment always as they direct, ac-"cording to the well-known Principles of Juſtice "and Equity. Anger and Paſſion, Hope, Love "and Affection, Hatred and Malice, and every "the leaſt Shadow and Suſpicion of theſe, will be "baniſh'd far off, from every Tribunal and Court "of Judicature where he preſides, together with

" Bribery and Corruption, Fear and Terror, Adu-
" lation and Flattery, and whatſoever may obſtruct
" or pervert the regular Courſe of Juſtice.

" Moſt certain it is, That no Order of Subjects
" whatſoever, has contributed more to the promo-
" ting of Sedition, Strife and Oppreſſion, than a
" Sett of Judges, who have been of a mercenary,
" corrupt and adulterous Diſpoſition.

" On the other hand, By a due and regular
" Courſe of Juſtice a Nation is preſerv'd in Peace
" and Unity. Love & Good-will are every where
" promoted; Complaints and Grievances, Hatred
" and Animoſities ceaſe; and a People is raiſed to
" that Pitch of Happineſs, as to fear no Evil, and
" to want nothing which is good for them.

Such uſeful, generous Sentiments as theſe, are diffuſed thro' that excellent Work of the noble Author he refers to; and he adds, " They cannot be
" too univerſally known, too frequently inculcated,
" or too deeply radicated in the Breaſts of all
" thoſe, who are Lovers of the publick Inte-
" reſt, and heartily ſollicitous for it's Preſervation
" and Advancement."

I ſhall now proceed to addreſs my ſelf,

3. To the *authorized Embaſſadors* of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Reverend and dear Brethren,

It ſhou'd, we well know, be in a particular manner our great Concern and Endeavour to make the

the Times better; and if God will bleſs our faithful Labours, Wiſdom and Knowledge ſhall be the Stability of our Times, and Strength of Salvation, and the Fear of the Lord our Treaſure.

Be we then exhorted to do our utmoſt, that this evangelical Prophecy in my Text may be fulfill'd in our Day.

The great End and principal Deſign of our Miniſtry, is to teach Men *Wiſdom*, *Knowledge* and *the Fear of God.*

The Prieſt's Lips ſhould keep Knowledge, and the People ſhould ſeek the Law at our Mouths, for we are the Meſſengers of the Lord of Hoſts. †.

And if we are deſtitute of the miniſterial Gifts and Graces of the Spirit of God, how poorly qualify'd ſhall we be for this ſacred Office, by which we are bro't ſo near to God!

Let us mourn for all the Provocations, We, or any of our Order of Men, have given to God, to deny his Bleſſing on the Miniſtry and Adminiſtrations of our Rulers, or our *own*; and by Faith repair to the great Sacrifice of Atonement for Mercy and Forgiveneſs; and humbly beg of God to give us that divine and heavenly Wiſdom and Knowledge we ſo much need, to qualify us for the faithful Diſcharge of our Miniſtry; and that he would make us wiſe to win Souls; and that we may no longer have ſo much cauſe to weep bit-

† Mal. 2. 7.

terly, becauſe of an unſucceſsful Miniſtry; that we labour in vain, and ſpend our Strength for nought and in vain. But if we are faithful, our Judgment is with the Lord, and our Work with our God, and we ſhall be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord, tho' Iſrael be not gathered, and many ſhou'd go on, to receive the Grace of God in vain, and even die without Wiſdom, and Salvation be forever far from them.

But let us beg of God, *my Brethren*, that we may not be ſent to make any blind Eyes blinder, and hard Hearts harder, that Men ſhould not convert and be healed; but that the Hand of the Lord may be with us, and a great Number believe, and turn to the Lord, and become his willing and obedient People in the Day of his Power; that he would therefore give to his People every where hearing Ears and underſtanding Hearts, that they may know and increaſe in Wiſdom, Knowledge and the Fear of God; and ſo the Seals of our Miniſtry be multiply'd, who ſhall be our Joy and Crown of Rejoicing in the Day of the Lord, if we may find Mercy of the Lord in that Day; and after we have preached to others, not be *ourſelves Caſt-aways.*

May the repeated Inſtances of the Death of our Brethren in the Miniſtry, awaken our moſt ſollicitous Endeavours to get ready for that awful Day; and the Death of that faithful Servant of the Lord, in a particular Manner, whom we lately followed to his Grave *; and who was the laſt *Meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts*, to our *Civil Rulers* on a like Occa-

* The Reverend Mr. *William Welſteed.*

ſion,

ſion, and then faithfully declared the Counſel of the Lord unto them.

And may a gracious God, for the Lord's ſake, cauſe his Face to ſhine again on that Sanctuary in this Town, in ſuch an awful Manner made deſolate by the Death of his worthy Colleague alſo, * but a few Months before him, and who was from one Year to another, the Mouth of the *Aſſembly*, to the God of all Wiſdom and Grace, for Aſſiſtance and Direction in the weighty Affairs of Government.

Help Lord, for the godly Man ceaſeth, for the Faithful fail from among the Children of Men!

I ſhall now cloſe with a Word of *Exhortation*,

Fourthly, and laſtly, *To the Body of the People. Hearken O People, every one of you* †. *Hear Counſel, and receive Inſtruction; be wiſe and refuſe it not*, as ever you deſire to ſee better Times.

Be you now exhorted to ſeek for Wiſdom, Knowledge and the Fear of God; without which we ſhall never ſee that Stability of the Times, we are ſo often wiſhing and praying for.

If our *civil Rulers* are endow'd with *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge*, *political* and *divine*, and are every Way qualified for their exalted Stations, yet if the Generality of the People are ignorant and deſtitute of the Fear of God, are careleſs and ſlothful in Religion,

* The Rev. Mr. *Ellis Gray*. † 1 Kings 22. 28.

and

and will not forſake their evil Ways, and return to the Lord, and the crying Sins they have been ſo often warned of, and humbled for, are ſtill abounding in the midſt of them, this will be a ſufficient Provocation to a holy God, to withold his Bleſſing from their wiſeſt and beſt concertedMeaſures to promote the Proſperity and Happineſs of their People.

" Whatever, ſays one, the Advantages are which " Rulers have to promote the People's Good, and " whatever Pains they take to improve them, yet " Rulers themſelves are but ſecond Cauſes, and will " fail in their Endeavours, and of their Aims, as " God ſhall withold his Bleſſing ; and that God " oftentimes does, as a juſt Puniſhment of the " People's Sins.

" When any Detriment befalls the State, it is " common for the Miniſters of it to bear theBlame, " whenas they many Times leaſt deſerve it : For if " there be an ungrateful, murmuring, proud Spirit, " a mutinous, envious and rebellious Spirit, an ir- " religious Spirit prevailing among a People, it is " not all the Counſels of the wiſeſt, nor Underſtand- " ing of the prudent, nor the Conduct of the moſt " ſufficientMen, that can keep off Ruin from them. " Such a People may be miſerable, do their Rulers " what they can.

" It was not King *Joſiah*'s Piety or Prudence " (however at preſent it laid ſome kind of Reſtraint " upon them) that could divert the approaching " lamentable Fate of that ſtubborn, ſinful People " he had the Rule of.

" There

" There is much of the Succeſs of Government " depending upon the ſuitable becoming Behaviour " of the People under it. " If they continue impenitent and unreformed, they may look for that awful Judgment, *not to have ſtrong Rods for Scepters to rule them.* Their Sins deſerve it; and the Lord has threatned thus to puniſh the Iniquity of his People. " When *Iſrael* had degenerated, " and their Religion was become Formality, and " their Devotion, Hypocriſy, the Lord ſaith, *Iſa.* " 29. 14. *The Wiſdom of their wiſe Men ſhall periſh,* " *and the Underſtanding of their prudent Men ſhall* " *be hid.* Thus *Samuel* threatens the People, * " *But if ye ſhall ſtill do wickedly, ye ſhall be conſu-* " *med, both ye and your King.* When the Lord " forſakes thoſe that have the Rule of his People, " no wonder if we have cauſe to complain as in " *Iſa.* 3. 12. *They which lead thee, cauſe thee to* " *err.* But the Riſe of this Miſchief is often in the " Wickedneſs of the People. So when God left " *David* to ſin in numbering the People, it is ſaid, " It was becauſe God's Anger was kindled againſt " *Iſrael.* †" And ſo will the Sins of his profeſſing People now, enkindle his Anger againſt them, and bring yet greater Darkneſs and Diſtreſs upon them.

When a People highly favour'd of God with a precious Day of Goſpel-Grace and Advantages for getting of Wiſdom, will not hear Counſel and receive Inſtruction, but deſpiſe Reproof, and will not obey the Voice of their Teachers, yea, hate Knowledge, and will not chooſe the Fear of the Lord; it may be look'd on as a Time of awful Deadneſs

* 1 Sam. 12. 25. † 2 Sam. 24. 1.

and

and Degeneracy indeed. And if it be ſo with us at this Day, yet we are now to hear the Voice and Call of Chriſt the *Incarnate Wiſdom of God*, in ſuch pungent, affectionate Language as that * ; Doth not Wiſdom cry, and Underſtanding put forth her Voice ; ſhe uttereth her Voice in the Streets ; ſhe crieth in the chief Place of Concourſe ; in the City ſhe uttereth her Words, ſaying, unto you, O Men, I call, and my Voice is to the Sons of Men ; O ye ſimple underſtand Wiſdom ; and ye Fools be of an underſtanding Heart. How long ye ſimple ones, will ye love Simplicity, and the Scorners delight in their Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge ? Turn you at my Reproof ; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you †.

And what Encouragement have we to ſeek for Wiſdom, Knowledge and the Fear of God : ‖ My Son, if thou wilt receive my Words, and hide my Commandments with thee, ſo that thou incline thine Heart unto Wiſdom, and apply thine Heart to Underſtanding ; yea, if thou wilt cry after Knowledge, and lift up thy Voice for Underſtanding ; if thou ſeekeſt her as Silver, and ſearcheſt for her as for hid Treaſures, then ſhalt thou underſtand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God : For the Lord giveth Wiſdom ; out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Underſtanding. He layeth up ſound Wiſdom for the Righteous ; He is a Buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the Paths of Judgment, and preſerveth the Way of his Saints. Then ſhalt thou underſtand Righteouſneſs and Judgment and Equity, yea every good

* Prov. 8th Ch. beg. † Prov. 22. 23. ‖ Prov. Ch. 3d.

Path.

Path. When Wiſdom entereth into thine Heart, and Knowledge is pleaſant unto thy Soul, Diſcretion ſhall preſerve thee, Underſtanding ſhall keep thee. And in the *third* Chapter, from the 13*th* Verſe, Happy is the Man that findeth Wiſdom, and the Man that getteth Underſtanding; for the Merchandize of it is better than the Merchandize of Silver, and the Gain thereof than fine Gold. She is more precious than Rubies, and all the Things thou canſt deſire are not be compared to her. Length of Days is in her right Hand, and in her left Riches and Honour. Her Ways are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all her Paths are Peace. She is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her. Exalt her, and ſhe ſhall promote thee: She ſhall bring thee to Honour when thou doſt embrace her. She ſhall give to thine Head an Ornament of Grace, a Crown of Glory ſhall ſhe deliver to thee.

What greater Encouragement can we deſire, *my Brethren*, to ſeek and plead for divine and heavenly Wiſdom and the Fear of God? But yet how many, tho' they have now a Price in their Hands for getting this Wiſdom, have no Heart to it? And are practically ſaying to almighty God, depart from us, for we deſire not the Knowledge of thy Ways.

And the Fear of the Lord, is ſo far from being their Treaſure, that this World with it's Honours, Riches and Pleaſures, is dearer to them, and more eſteem'd and valued, than the Favour of God, or the Riches of an heavenly Inheritance.

Their Time and Tho'ts are ſwallow'd up in worldly Purſuits; in adding to their worldly Poſſeſſions and Treaſures; and they ſpend their Money for that which is not Bread, and their Labour for that which ſatisfys not. The Cares of the World and Deceitfulneſs of Riches choke the Seed ſown in their Hearts, and ſo it becomes unfruitful: The Spirit of this World eats out the Vitals of Religion. And tho' they may keep up a Form of Godlineſs, they are utter Strangers to the Power of it, governing their Hearts and Lives.

Have we not Reaſon to fear, that the Number of ſuch has been awfully increaſed, and great Provocation thereby given to God, to ſcatter Darkneſs in the Paths of our Rulers, and to bring us into perplexing Straits and Difficulties on many Accounts, out of which we are not extricated to this Day?

The lamentable Degeneracies and Backſlidings of this People, have been the procuring Cauſes of all the Tokens of the divine Anger.

And if they ſhall perſiſt in them, it will look awfully with reſpect to the Infliction, not only of more temporal Judgments, but of ſpiritual Plagues and Judgments too, which are more to be deprecated than any other; and we ſhall have reaſon to fear that the Lord has caſt many away from his Preſence, and taken his holy Spirit from them, has let them alone in Sin, and given them up to their own Hearts Luſts, and to walk after their own Counſel, and will ſuffer them to live only to fill up the Meaſure of their Iniquities, and to treaſure

up

up Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.

But may God of his infinite Mercy be better to us than our Fears; and by the gracious Influences of his Spirit, revive his Work in the midſt of the Years, and in Wrath remember Mercy for the whole Body of this People, in giving Wiſdom, Knowledge and the Fear of God to them; that our Fleſh may no longer tremble for fear of God, and have ſo much reaſon to be afraid of theſe Judgments being inflicted on us.

And we ſhall have reaſon to hope they are not as yet; if this People ſhall be generally ſtirring up themſelves to engage in the Fear and Service of God, to get Wiſdom, and with all their gettings to get Underſtanding.

And O that all the People of the Land were wiſe and underſtood this, and would conſider their latter End! This is the affectionate Wiſh of the great God concerning this People; and ſo is that, O that there were ſuch an Heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and their Children forever!

To draw towards a Cloſe.

Let all who have an Intereſt at the Throne of Grace, unite in our humble and fervent Supplications to that God by whom Kings reign, for our KING in ſupreme, and all in ſubordinate Places of Power and Truſt:

That our rightful and lawful Sovereign, *King* GEORGE *the Second*, may be *wiſe* as an Angel of God; that he may be long continued a nurſing Father to his Church and People, both at home and abroad; and that the PROTESTANT SUCCESSION *in his illuſtrious Houſe* may abide before the Lord, and no Weapon formed againſt it ever proſper.

And that there may be a Succeſſion of PRINCES on the *Britiſh* Throne, who ſhall patronize the Cauſe of Liberty, and pure Religion, ſo long as the Sun and Moon ſhall endure.

That the KING may be always favour'd with *wiſe* and faithful Counſellors, and the Things which belong to the *Nation*'s Peace not be hid from thoſe who are entruſted with their Counſels; and that in their Peace we may have Peace.

That our PRIVILEDGES, *civil* and *ſacred*, may be continued; that we may never come to know the Worth of them by the Want of them.

That Wiſdom and Knowledge may be the Stability of *our* Times; that GOD would therefore vouchſafe his gracious Preſence with our *General Aſſembly this Day*, in the important Affair before them, and in all the public Affairs relating to the Peace and Proſperity of the *Province* thro' the Year; that all may be over-rul'd to the Advancement of the Glory of God, and the beſt Good of this People; and that the providential Preſence of God may ſtill be as a Wall of Fire round about us, and that his ſpiritual Preſence may be the Glory in the

the midſt of us, and that on all our Glory he would create a Defence.

To conclude,

Let us pray, That He who dwells between the Cherubims would ſhine forth, ſtir up his Strength and come and ſave his People, and graciouſly appear in all our Mounts of Difficulty, and extricate us out of all thoſe perplexing Difficulties, our Provocations of a holy and righteous God have bro't us into; that his tender Mercies may ſpeedily prevent us, now we are brought ſo low; that the God of our Salvation would help us, for the Glory of his Name, and deliver us, and purge away our Sins for his Name's Sake; and that he would make us glad according to the Days wherein he has afflicted us, and the Years wherein we have ſeen Evil.

That he would therefore pour out his Spirit, rain down Righteouſneſs, and revive his Work in the Hearts of all Ranks, Orders, and Ages of Men, and ſo prepare this People for further Mercy and Salvation, even for the Fulfilment of the Words in my Text, *And Wiſdom and Knowledge ſhall be the Stability of thy Times, and Strength of Salvation; the Fear of the Lord is his Treaſure:* And thoſe alſo of the ſame evangelical Prophet *, *Then ſhall thy Light break forth as the Morning, and thine Health ſhall ſpring forth ſpeedily, and thy Righteouſneſs ſhall go before thee; the Glory of the Lord ſhall be thy Rere-ward; Then ſhalt thou call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer; thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay, Here I am.*

* Chap. 58. 8, 9.

NOW

NOW unto the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power for ever and ever.

A M E N.

☞ THE able and excellent *Ruler* and *Divine*, I have once and again had Reference to in the foregoing Sermon, was *Governour* SALTONSTALL, in his *Election Sermon*, preach'd in the Colony of *Connecticut* in the Year 1697.